

Module A: Looking for Richard and Richard III - Ideas

Ideas	<i>Richard III</i>	<i>Looking for Richard</i>	Values
Iniquity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard is the embodiment of evil. His character with its origins in the Vice of the morality plays takes perverse pleasure in deception and trickery. He delights in his demonization. In his opening soliloquy he presents us with his plans to excel in iniquity. Shakespeare takes the stereotypical Vice and imbues him with very human traits. Richard refers throughout the play to his physical shortcomings. His deformity and lack of social graces stigmatise him, and invite a modicum of understanding exposing his vulnerability and providing a partial reason for his evil actions. <i>'I shall despair. There is no creature loves me, / And if I die no soul shall pity me.'</i> He is the malevolent outsider rejected by his own mother. Richard refers to his deformity and lack of friends throughout the play. <i>'And no friends to back my suit withal/But the plain devil and dissembling looks?'</i> (1.ii) He is also a Renaissance Machiavel who believes that the end justifies the means. Shakespeare introduces a secular notion of leadership. Richard values power above any traditional moral restraint. The other characters, particularly the women, remind the audience of Richard's evil. Anne states <i>'Foul devil, for God's sake</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pacino's driving purpose is to connect a modern American audience with Shakespeare. Richard is a fascinating and enigmatic villain who universally reflects the traits of an individual who evil. Pacino's representation of Richard reflects his evil. He does blend this with Machiavellian traits and reveals some of Richard's vulnerability. As an actor, Pacino has played mobsters; therefore, he injects Mafioso malevolence into his role. The other actors are fascinated with how far Richard is prepared to go. They acknowledge the terrible consequences of his actions. <i>"But he has let the pursuit of power totally corrupt him. He is alienated from his own body and his own self"</i> (Kimble). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderation: Many of the character are overwrought or overly ambitious. Richard acts decisively regardless of the consequences. His actions justify the end result so he will not countenance moderation. Integrity: Once Richard and Buckingham have embarked on their ambitious journey they compromise their integrity. This in turn means that the core values of loyalty and honesty are unheeded. Compassion and empathy: Richard does not reveal a modicum of compassion for others. His actions are cruel and callous. One of his major flaws is his lack of empathy for

	<p>hence and trouble us not / for thou hast made the happy earth thy hell.' Queen Margaret calls Richard 'the slave of nature and the son of hell'. She represents the inescapability of humanity committing evil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard expresses no remorse or emotion when he orders the death of his brother Clarence and the young princes. 'Are you now going to dispatch this thing?' 'Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead' 		<p>others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Truth: Richard confides in the audience just as the Vice character did in the morality plays, but he deceives the others with half-truths and omission. Prince Edward courageously reminds the audience of the importance of enshrining truth as a core value: 'Methinks that truth should live from age to age...' (AIII, si)
Conscience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How far are we prepared to go? Even at the end when Richard has been confronted by the ghosts of those he killed and betrayed he exclaims 'O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me?' (Av, siii) He does not seek salvation. However, his syntactically disjointed speech after the confrontation with the ghosts reveals his inner turmoil. 'Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I. /Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am.' (Av, siii) Shakespeare employs dialogia; two opposing voices, one accusatory; one defensive. The audience would recall Margaret's curse, 'The worm of conscience begnaw thy soul!' (A1siii) The abdication of an active conscience is demonstrated by many of the characters enabling Richard to achieve his Machiavellian rise to the throne. For example, Lady Anne ignores the pangs of her conscience and succumbs to Richard's seduction. Shakespeare explores how individuals can ignore their conscience and commit evil such as the murderers of Clarence who 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As Pacino moves into the backstory of the play he moves beyond the representation of a Machiavel intent on gaining power to make Richard more complex. The scene with the ghosts is rendered surreal through the use of rapid cross cutting as Pacino blends the rehearsals and the performance. His performance as Richard reveals a disheveled and disoriented man who questions his actions and his fate. The scene with the women omitted by Pacino is key to changing the audience's perception of Richard as his evil, cruelty and complete lack of compassion and morality are exposed (AIV, siv). 	

	<p>hesitate fleetingly before taking his life or Buckingham who supports Richard until he makes that mistake of having to consider whether he supports the murder of the two young princes – <i>'He did all the dirty work and propped up the king.'</i> (<i>Looking for Richard</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard equates conscience with something distinctly physical that he can control. He dismisses conscience as only 'a word' that has been created, denying any notion of incorporeality. However, the exclamatory tone and the call to arms metaphors suggest that Richard has to convince himself to believe his own words. <i>Conscience is but a word that cowards use, Devis'd at first to keep the strong in awe: Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law!</i> Clarence fears death because he has killed others to increase his power <i>'I have done those things, /That now give evidence against my soul...'</i> (A1, siv). The women in the play represent the voice of conscience and compassion. 		
Free will vs. providentialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard is determined to orchestrate his own destiny. He is <i>'determined to prove a villain'</i>; however, this is a pun referring to the conflict between his free will and his destiny to be a villain. Even when he faces death in battle, Richard reminds us: <i>Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Looking for Richard</i> reflects a secular world with no reference to determinism. The focus of the documentary is on Richard's individuality and his machinations. Humanist self-determinism reflects the 20th century economic rationalism and the rise of the powerful corporate giants where individuality 	

	<p><i>And I will stand the hazard of the die... (AVsiv)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queen Margaret reminds him of God's will and providence. The Duchess of York foreshadows the dire consequences of his evil: <i>Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end;/Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend. (AIv,siv)</i> Although the defeat of Richard supports providentialism, Shakespeare's representation of Richard as a seductive and charming villain provokes thought about the place of free will and determinism and represents the renaissance struggle. 	and humanity's will to succeed (the American Dream is grounded in the belief that it is the individual who can determine their own fate) were valued.	
Duplicity/ Dissimulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard is an equivocator with a protean talent who deceives to mock and manipulate others. <i>'As I am subtle, false, and treacherous...'</i> (A1, si) <i>'And thus I clothe my naked villainy...And seem a saint when I most play the devil.'</i> (AI, siii) He ironically reveals the truth to his victims. Even after all of the bloody deeds he is able to convince the people, albeit for a brief time, to support him. Machiavelli asserted that <i>'one must know how to disguise his nature well, and how to be a fine liar and hypocrite.'</i> During Richard's battle with his conscience he uses language to deceive himself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As one actor observes in <i>Looking for Richard</i> <i>'So now all that's left is winning the people!'</i> Pacino sings gleefully <i>'He's got the whole world in his hands!'</i> 	
Power of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The power of Shakespeare's language: the nuances, lyricism, the delicious irony and dramatic techniques. In <i>Looking for</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vanessa Redgrave speaks lyrically of the power and emotion of Shakespeare's use of language – <i>'the beauty, depth, passion,</i> 	

	<p><i>Richard</i>, when the actors discuss the ambiguity and complexity of the lines in the play and how they should interpret these lines they convey to the viewer the duality of both the magnetism and refutation of Shakespeare's artistry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard frequently employs powerful rhetoric and clever word play to seduce others and the audience. Imagery and striking metaphors flourish and are used to symbolically represent Richard's villainy. He plays with words and half-truths. When he is persuading Anne to love him, he tells her ironically that his heart "<i>'Tis figured in my tongue.</i>" (1.ii) Buckingham is a master of political rhetoric. Richard owes much of his success to the cooperation of his co-conspirator and masterful orator. 	<p><i>music of his words.</i>'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The African American speaks eloquently about how words today have lost their meaning and feeling, <i>'If we felt what we said, and say less we'd mean more.'</i> 	
The Role of the Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shakespeare's exploration of the tragic consequences of ambition, the lust for power and the suppression of morality would have provoked his Elizabethan audience to contemplate their own actions. Theatre in England was controlled by the Queen's spymaster Sir Frank Walsingham until his death in 1590, two years before the release of <i>Richard III</i>. It was viewed as a powerful propaganda weapon. While Elizabeth favored the theatre and permitted great freedom of expression, her counsel was also quick to cut lines or entire scenes that contained offensive political content, social criticism or unpatriotic themes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'It has always been a dream of mine to communicate how I feel about Shakespeare to others.' Pacino's driving passion is to connect the American public with Shakespeare through the play. In this meta-documentary, Pacino sees it as his mission to convey his love and respect for Shakespeare's work. 	

<p>Complicity/ humanity's frailty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard's acquisition of power can be attributed to his manipulative skills and the moral weakness of the other characters. As Machiavelli states in <i>The Prince</i> 'It is double pleasure to deceive the deceiver.' Richard has an unerring sense for the weaknesses of other people, which he constantly exploits. Lady Anne is fully aware of what Richard has done yet she is seduced by his flattery and agrees to marry him. Richard judges her weakness accurately. 'What, do you tremble? Are you all afraid? /Alas, I blame you not, for you are mortal...' A1, s.ii) When the murderers come to kill Clarence, Brackenbury's inaction is attributed to the desire to protect his reputation, 'I will not reason what is meant hereby, / Because I will be guiltless of the meaning' (A1, s.iv). Even the anonymous murderers argue about morality before killing Clarence. The Archbishop is persuaded by Richard to hand the young princes over to him removing the protection of the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The actors in <i>Looking for Richard</i> are fascinated by the battle for power and the hatred that is palpable, 'They are clawing at each other for the throne!' They compare the play to the film <i>The Godfather</i> – 'The gathering of the Dons in this room.' 	
<p>Ambition, reputation, vanity and power</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecclesiastes 2:11: 'Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.' Shakespeare reminds the audience of the shortcomings of blindly pursuing power or riches, the hollowness of titles and reputation and the folly of vanity and self-importance. He forces us to question what 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pacino cleverly connects to Shakespeare's exploration of humanity's flaws to his own myopic pursuit of his grand project by intertextually referring to Prospero's famous lines from Shakespeare's last great play <i>The Tempest</i>. This focus reflects the existential philosophy of the 20th century that explored humanity's struggle in an absurd and meaningless universe. <i>The Tempest</i> quote at the opening and close 	

	<p>it means to exist as a human being in the world where our flaws compromise our relationship with God, self and others. His focus on the actions of the self reflects the Renaissance humanist way of thinking. Hasting's last words remind the audience about how humanity focuses too much on self and loses sight of spirituality and the meaning of life. <i>'O momentary grace of mortal men, / Which we more hunt for than the grace of God.'</i> (AIII, siv) Brackenbury echoes the same sentiment: <i>'Princes have but their titles for their glories...'</i> (AI, siv)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard repeatedly refers to his plain looks and misshapen form. <i>'Cheated of feature by dissembling nature, / Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time'</i> (AI, si) The motif of the looking glass reflects his contradictory insecurity and narcissism. In the final scene before battle when he states <i>'Richard loves Richard'</i> he tries to assert his narcissistic embrace of self, yet the fractured lines reveal his emptiness. The unconscionable, ambitious pursuit of power is palpable in <i>King Richard III</i>. Richard is not the only character who betrays, manipulates, kills and lies his way to obtain power and control. Coursen (2000) states that Richard is <i>'a Renaissance wolf among medieval sheep'</i>. Buckingham's ambitions and greed drive him to support Richard's evil deeds. Richard refers to him as his <i>'other self'</i> (AII, siii) 	of the documentary reminds the viewer of the shortcomings of wish-fulfillment.	
Revenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the play follows the Senecan 		

	<p>revenge tragedy form, there is no redemption. Richmond avenges the tragic deaths when he kills Richard in battle, but his actions are not motivated by vengeance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The women are the ones who speak mainly of revenge. Ironically, they are unable to enact it. Anne embittered by the murder of her husband and father-in-law retorts to Richard <i>'To be revenged on him that killed my husband.'</i> (1.ii) Margaret reminds all of the characters about her right to seek vengeance. She condemns Richard to <i>'No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine, / Unless it be while some tormenting dream / Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils!'</i> (R3 1.iii) Critic Bevington (2004) asserts <i>'Prophecies... give structure to the sequence of retributive actions and keep grim score.'</i> 		
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